

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00

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R 221620Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0403

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I L CAIRO 9469

LIMDIS

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, XF

SUBJECT: ABU IYAD SHAKES SADAT'S HAND

1. AHRAH AND AKHBAR NOV 22 FEATURE FRONT PAGE PICTURES OF SMILING SADAT WELCOMING BLACK SEPTEMBER LEADER ABU IYAD WHO, ACCORDING TO CAPTION, WAS RECEIVED YESTERDAY BY THE PRESIDENT. NO FURTHER REPORTING OR COMMENTARY IN ANY NEWSPAPER.

2. COMMENT: WIDELY PUBLICIZED APPEARANCE OF ABU IYAD IN
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SADAT'S DRAWING ROOM IS PUZZLING. DESPITE ABU IYAD'S CLAIM

IN BEIRUT THAT ONLY HUSAIN WAS ON RABAT HIT LIST, WE HAVE NO REASON TO DOUBT THAT EGYPTIANS ACCEPT ACCURACY OF INFORMATION AS PASSED TO THEM BY MOROCCANS, I.E., THAT LIST INCLUDED FIVE NAMES, INCLUDING SADAT'S. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, THE 14 CONVICTED TERRORISTS HAVE BEEN SENT TO CAIRO FROM RABAT AND ARE BEING HELD HERE.

3. GIVEN THE PREMISE THAT, PRIOR TO ARAFAT'S ARRIVAL THREE DAYS AGO, SADAT THOUGHT HE WAS ONE OF ABU IYAD'S RABAT TARGETS, IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT SADAT WOULD RECEIVE ABU IYAD WITHOUT CONVINCING EXPLANATION BY ARAFAT. WE SUSPECT ARAFAT ASKED SADAT TO SEE ABU IYAD FOR SAKE OF ARAB UNITY IN THESE TENSE DAYS. HOWEVER, SINCE SADAT WOULD PRESUMABLY HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY IRRITATED AT ANY PLO PLOT TO DISRUPT RABAT CONFERENCE, EVEN BY MURDER OF PLO'S ARCH ENEMY, WE ASSUME ARAFAT MUST HAVE PROVIDED SOME FURTHER COGENT EXPLANATION. HE MAY HAVE TAKEN LINE THAT ABU IYAD, WHOSE PARANOIC HATE OF HUSAIN IS WELL KNOWN, WENT OFF ON HIS OWN WITHOUT CLEARING WITH ARAFAT, BUT HAS NOW APOLOGIZED FOR BREACH OF DISCIPLINE TO ARAFAT'S PERSONAL SATISFACTION.

4. ALTERNATIVELY, ARAFAT DESPITE PROTESTATIONS TO CONTRARY IN RABAT, MAY IN FACT HAVE BEEN AWARE OF OPERATION BEFOREHAND AND WAS ABLE TO ASSURE SADAT DURING OR AFTER CONFERENCE THAT HIS NAME WAS NOT ON LIST. IF ARAFAT DID ADMIT TO PRIOR KNOWLEDGE, THEN APOLOGY WOULD BE DUE SADAT FROM ARAFAT, NOT ABU IYAD.

5. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NO IDEA WHAT ABU IYAD SAID TO SADAT, WE WOULD EXPECT PRESIDENT TO URGE HIM TO ESCHEW TERRORISM IF PLO INTERNATIONAL IMAGE IS TO BE ENHANCED, AND MAY EVEN HAVE MADE EFFORT TO GET HIM TO DROP RECENTLY REITERATED CALL FOR HUSAIN'S ASSASSINATION. FOR HIS PART, ABU IYAD MAY HAVE SOUGHT TO OBTAIN RELEASE OF 14 RABAT TERRORISTS NOW BEING HELD IN CAIRO. EXTENT TO WHICH EITHER MAN INFLUENCES THE OTHER IS DOUBTFUL, BUT POSSIBILITY THAT 14 TERRORISTS MAY BE TURNED OVER TO PLO CUSTODY CANNOT BE EXCLUDED.

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